Counterplan Text – I favor that the United States value rehabilitation over retribution in the criminal justice system.

It textually competes by removing “to be” from the resolution. And, it competes through net benefits.

E-Prime challenges assertions of absolute truth. “To be” verbs posit opinions as facts. **Passuello 9**[[1]](#footnote-1)

9 Ways **E-Prime Can Help You Become a Better Thinker** 1. It Exposes Opinions Disguised as Facts **Consider “Beethoven is the best composer ever”, or “This is a stupid idea”. These sentences illustrate how we express opinions as if they represent**ed established **facts. Getting rid of *to be* helps us remember that much of what we say represents**, as a matter of fact, just **opinions.** Consider the E-Prime alternatives for those sentences: “I like Beethoven’s compositions best”, and “I utterly dislike this idea!”. 2. It Promotes Higher Accuracy and Exposes Hidden Assumptions Refraining from using the verb *to be* may require you provide much more detail than usual. For instance, when rewording “Jack is smart”, you could end up with “Jack scored 140 on his IQ test” or maybe “Jack earns money without working” — depending on *your*definition of ‘smart’. E-Prime encourages you to detail ambiguous words (such as ‘smart’), helping expose any hidden assumptions behind them. 3. It Reveals the (Fallible) Observer **Consider the statement “The Earth is round”.** Notice how **the verb *to be* carries** with it an intellectual momentum of **completeness, finality, and time-independence. It sounds like** an **absolute**, immutable **truth**, doesn’t it? Yes, it does… exactly like the statement “The Earth is flat” just a few hundred years ago. **The alternative** E-Prime **construct “The Earth *looks* round” shows that** an observer exists — **an observer that simply *perceives* the Earth as round** — and that this observer **may have flaws in perception.** E-Prime brings back a certain ‘humbleness’ in language, getting rid of the “God Mode” in speech and reminding us we make mistakes.

Rejecting absolute moral rhetoric solves multiple scenarios for extinction… maybe. **Greene 02**[[2]](#footnote-2)

[Full Text Available] This essay is an attack on common sense—moral common sense, in particular. Mounting evidence suggests that our sense2 of right and wrong is a finely honed product of natural selection (Wright, 1994). We think about moral matters as we do in large part because our kind of moral thinking, in the heads of our prehistoric ancestors, enabled them to reproduce more effectively than their competitors, leaving us, their descendants, to inherit their world. But the world they left us is radically different from the world we now inhabit, and, as a result, what was biologically advantageous for them may prove disastrous for us. At the risk of being overly dramatic, I propose that **the fate of humankind will turn on our ability**, or inability, **to transcend** the **common sense morality** we inherited from our ancestors**.** The great **global problems of our time—**the **[like] prolif**eration of weapons of mass destruction, the **[and] disruption of the environment**, etc**.—can only be solved through cooperation and compromise among people with radically different moral outlooks.** And this, I believe, is unlikely to happen so long as the people of the world hold fast to their respective versions of moral common sense.

**[…]**

In the past, people raised in a particular culture had relatively little to do with cultural outsiders, but that is far from the case today. Christian fundamentalists live with abortion laws that they would not dream of enacting themselves. Gay couples are denied the economic benefits of marriage because their lifestyle is unacceptable to the majority of their compatriots. People die in wars they do not support. Children in the developing world die of starvation because people in the developed world choose not to help them or create circumstances that make it impossible for them to help themselves. People in the developed world occasionally die when the frustrations of the developing world find expression in the form of terrorist attacks. Today, an individual’s sphere of causal influence extends far beyond the environment that is primarily responsible for shaping her moral sensibility, and as a result ours is a world of people who see the world in radically different moral colors attempting to impose their respective wills on one another. In other words, **the Nuclear Age has arrived, and we’re** still **using Stone Age moral psychology.** The human tendency to absorb the values of one’s immediate environment and project those values onto the entire world may work well enough for life in small, relatively isolated hunter-gatherer bands, but it’s absolutely disastrous for **billions of people raised in a variety of different cultures** and subcultures who **must share a world in spite of their incompatible worldviews.** Human moral psychology doesn’t scale well.14 4.4 Moral Realism and the Revisionist ProposalMoral realism is the theoretical expression of the Stone Age moral psychology with which we are saddled. It is an illusion that exacerbates conflict and promotes misunderstanding. If I want things to be one way and you want things to be some other way, **we might** be able to **reach** some sort of **compromise. But,** if I want things to be one way, and **if I believe that the way I want things is** not *merely* the way I want things but also **the way things *ought to be***, and if I believe further that it’s *just plain to see* that my way is *the way things ought to be* **and that anyone who says otherwise must be** *outright lying* or ***willfully refusing to see the truth*, and** if you want things to be some other way and **you’re just as convinced of the *rightness* of your position as** I am of mine, then **what chance do we have of reaching** a reasonable **compromise?** I see you as an errant child, someone who has lost the way, someone who wasn’t paying attention on the day right and wrong were explained, or, perhaps, as someone who was paying attention but who, for whatever inexplicable reason, has chosen to cast aside what is right and good in favor of that which is base and evil. And you, of course, see me in a similar light. I attempt to argue with you and am amazed at your obtuseness. The words I speak so clearly reveal the truth, and yet you persist in your wrongheaded ways. And you are similarly perplexed by me and my stubbornness. Haidt (2001, pg. 823) summarizes the social-intuitionist take on ordinary moral discourse: The bitterness, futility, and self-righteousness of most moral arguments can now be explicated. In a debate on abortion, politics, consensual incest, or on what my friend did to your friend, both sides believe that their positions are based on reasoning about the facts and issues involved (the wag-the-dog illusion). Both sides present what they take to be excellent arguments in support of their positions. Both sides expect the other side to be responsive to such reasons (the wag-the-other-dog’s-tail illusion). When the other side fails to be affected by such good reasons, each side concludes that the other side must be insincere, closed-minded, or even devious…. In this way the culture wars over issues such as homosexuality and abortion can generate morally motivated players on both sides who believe that their opponents are not morally motivated (Haidt & Hersh, 2001, Robinson, Keltner, Ward, & Ross, 1995). A mess, indeed. But how to clean it up? **Must we resign ourselves to** a world of **endless conflict and misunderstanding?** Haidt (Pg. 823) suggests a shift in tactics: Moral reasoning may have little persuasive power in conflict situations, but the social intuitionist model says that moral reasoning can be effective in influencing people before a conflict arises… If one can get the other person to see the issue in a new way, perhaps by reframing a problem to trigger new intuitions, then one can influence others with one’s words. This, however, does not get to the heart of the problem. It is a gesture toward more subtle, less explosive forms of moral warfare, not peace. Moreover, it is a lesson that most professional moral communicators have already learned from experience. No surprise that novels, plays, metaphors, and anecdotes are more effective means of propaganda than philosophical arguments and statistics. (I’ve never stayed in a hotel room that came furnished with a copy of Kant’s *Grundlegung*.) As Haidt suggests, a better understanding of moral psychology may be used to further one’s own moral agenda—a good or bad thing depending on the agenda in question. But I propose instead that we use our understanding of moral psychology to transcend our ordinary modes of moral discourse rather than to operate more effectively within them.15 Once again, the enemy, the wolf in sheep’s clothing, is moral realism. Conflicts of interest may be inevitable, but they need not be exacerbated by people’s unflagging confidence that they’re *right* and that their opponents are *wrong*. **The solution**, then, **is to** get rid of realist thinking and to start by **get**ting **rid of realist language. Speak** only **in terms that make the subjective nature of value plain.** Instead of saying that capital punishment is *wrong* say that you are opposed to it. Say that it is an ineffective deterrent, difficult to implement in a colorblind fashion, and likely to lead to irreversible mistakes. And then *say no more*. Instead of saying that eating animals is *wrong* and a form of *murder*, say that you are opposed to eating animals because you wish to alleviate suffering and you believe that this practice causes much unnecessary suffering. Instead of saying that gay marriage undermines “family values,” say that it undermines *your* family’s values, that it is against the teachings of your religion, etc. (Obviously some people will have an easier time with this transition than others. This is an important point to be explored later in Chapter 5.)

Discourse focus has real world impacts. You cannot separate the plan’s rhetoric from the advocacy because representations frame our understanding of reality.

**Russell 9**[[3]](#footnote-3)

A critical reading of this debate suggests that setting priorities for health care is a discursive process (that is, it involves argument and debate). The policy-as-discourse perspective embraces a number of approaches that are centrally concerned with how policy problems are represented. **Policymakers are not simply responding to "problems"** that exist in the community, **they are actively framing problems and thereby shaping what can be thought about and acted upon.** According to Stone (1988): "The essence of policymaking in political communities [is] the struggle over ideas. Ideas are at the centre of all political conflict .... Each idea is an argument, or more accurately, a collection of arguments in favour of different ways of seeing the world" (p. 11). Within this conceptualization of policymaking, the understanding of "what evidence is" takes on a very different meaning. Evidence can no longer be considered as abstract, disembodied knowledge separate from its social context: There is no such entity as "the body of evidence." There are simply (more or less) competing (re)constructions of evidence able to support almost any position. Much of what is called evidence is, in fact, a contested domain, constituted in the debates and controversies of opposing viewpoints in search of ever more compelling arguments. (Wood, Ferlie, and Fitzgerald 1998, p. 1735) A number of empirical studies of health policy as discourse have been undertaken, though in general, these are not well understood or widely cited in mainstream health services research. Steve Maguire (2002), for example, describes a longitudinal case study of the development and introduction of drugs for the treatment of AIDS in the United States from 1981 to 1994. Detailed analysis of extensive field notes and narrative interviews with people with AIDS, activists, researchers, industry executives, and policymakers led his team to challenge three assumptions in the evidence-into-policy literature: (1) that there is a clear distinction between the "evidence producing" system and the "evidence adopting" system; (2) that the structure and operation of these systems are given, stable, and determinant of, rather than indeterminate and affected by, the adoption process; and (3) that the production of evidence precedes its adoption. Maguire's study found the opposite: that there was a fluid, dynamic, and reciprocal relationship between the different systems involved, and that activists "successfully opened up the black box of science" via a vibrant social movement which, over the course of the study, profoundly influenced the research agenda and the process and speed of gaining official approval for new drugs. For example, whereas the scientific community had traditionally set the gold standard as placebo controlled trials with hard outcome measures (such as death), the AIDS activists successfully persuaded them that placebo arms and "body count" trials were unethical in AIDS research, spurring a shift towards what is now standard practice in drug research--a new drug is compared with best conventional treatment, not placebo, and "surrogate outcomes" are generally preferred when researching potentially lethal conditions. **The role of key individuals in reframing** the **issue[s]** ("hard outcomes" or "body counts") was **[is] crucial in determining what counted as best evidence and how this evidence was used in policymaking.** Importantly, Maguire's fieldwork showed that AIDS activists did not simply "talk their way in" to key decision-making circles by some claim to an inherent version of what was true or right. Rather, they captured, and skillfully built upon, existing discourses within society, such as the emerging patients' rights movement and the epistemological debates already being held within the academic community that questioned the value of "clean" research trials (which only included "typical" and "compliant" patients without co-morbidity). They also collaborated strategically with a range of other stakeholders to achieve a common goal ("strange bedfellows ... pharmaceutical companies along with the libertarian, conservative right wing allied themselves with people with AIDS and gays" (p. 85). Once key individuals in the AIDS movement had established themselves as credible with press, public, and scientists, they could exploit this credibility powerfully: "their public comments on which trials made sense or which medications were promising could sink research projects" (p. 85). "Fair" Policymaking: A Process of Argumentation In summary, interpretivist and critical research on the nature of policymaking shows that it involves, in addition to the identification, evaluation, and use of research evidence, a complex process of framing, deliberation, negotiation, and collective judgment. Empirical research studies also suggest that this is a sophisticated and challenging process. In a qualitative research study of priority-setting committees in Ontario, for example, Singer and colleagues (2000) identified factors such as representation of multiple perspectives, opportunities for everyone to express views, transparency, and an explicit appeals process as key elements of fair decision making. An important dimension of this collective deliberation is the selection and presentation of evidence in a way that an audience will find credible and appealing. **If we wish to better understand** the deliberative processes involved in **policymaking,** and how evidence actually gets "talked into practice" (or not) at a micro level of social interaction, then **we require a** theoretical **framework that places central focus on** language, argumentation, and **discourse.**

Independently, the aff’s commitment to a static ontology makes the resolution false… I think. The inherent indeterminacy of the world undermines strong ontological statements.

**Gaonkar and Topper 05**[[4]](#footnote-4)

What the concept of **ontological sources fail**s **to provide**, however, is **adequate traction for** understanding the tangled mediations that join agents’ ontological conceptions to **moral-political** principles and **practices.** Understandably, **White is skeptical of the idea that ontological commitments and political practices are linked through** relationships of **strict entailment, such that one can chart a direct logical path** from ontological sources to political principles**.** From the promontory of the weak ontologist, this idea and the quest for moral or political certainty are futile and reckless. **Such assumptions**, White contends, **are premised on** a “**forgetfulness**” **of** the **contingencies and indeterminancies** that are such conspicuous features **of the** late modern **political landscape.** 8

As we see it, however, the problem is not (as the strong ontologist may maintain) one of filling but of bridging the gap that separates the respective provinces of ontology and politics. Indeed, if this gap is to be traversed in a “felicitous” manner, it may be necessary to supplement the idea of ontological sources with less abstract, middle-level concepts that enable one to specify in greater detail crucial mediating factors such as culture and institutions.

## AT You’re Not Speaking E-Prime

1. No reason to evaluate in-round discourse. You should vote for the better advocacy, and mine uses E-Prime.

2. Spillover. People can change writing habits easily. Once people write in E-Prime, speech will follow.

3. Comparative offense. I try to avoid “to be” verbs; the AC doesn’t.

4. Conditionality. I won’t defend that discourse.

## AT Reductionism ACs

Standard English posits the world as static which creates violent conflict and turns the case. Only E-prime recognizes the dynamic nature of existence.

**Wilson 90** writes[[5]](#footnote-5)

Turning next to the nigmatic John who "is" unhappy and grouchy yet also "is" bright and cheerful, we find a surprising parallel to the wave/particle duality. Remaining in **the reality-tunnel of standard English**, one might decide that John "really is" manic depressive. Or one speaker might decide that the other speaker hasn't "really" observed John carefully, or "is" an "untrustworthy witness." Again, the innocent-looking "is" **causes us to populate the world with spooks, and may provoke** us to heated debate, or **violent quarrel.** (That town in Northern Ireland mentioned earlier -- "is" it "really" Derry or Londonderry?) Rewriting in English Prime we find "John appears unhappy and grouchy in the office" and "John appears bright and cheerful on holiday at the beach." We have left the realms of spooks and re-entered the existential or phenomenological world of actual experiences in spacetime. And, lo and behold, another metaphysical contradiction has disappeared in the process. To say "John is" anything, incidentally, always opens the door to spooks and metaphysical debates. The historical logic of Aristotelian philosophy as embedded in **Standard English** always **carries an association of stasis with every "is,"** unless the speaker or writer remembers to include a date, and even then linguistic habit will cause many to "not notice" the date and assume "is" means a stasis (an Aristotelian timeless essence or spook.) For instance, "John is beardless" may deceive many people (but not trained police officers) if john becomes a wanted criminal and alters his appearance by growing a beard. "John is a Protestant" or "John is a Catholic" may change any day, if John has developed a habit of philosophical speculation. Even stranger, "John is a Jew" has at least five different meanings, some of which may change and some remain constant, and only one of which tells us anything about how John will behave in spacetime..... **"John is a plumber"** also **contains a fallacy. John may have quit plumbing since you saw him last** and may work as a hair dresser now. Stranger things have happened. In E-Prime one would write "John had a job as a plumber last I knew." Trivial? Overly pedantic? According to a recent article Professor Harry **Weinberg** -- curiously, an old acquaintance of mine -- once **tried to emphasize** these points **[this] to a class by trying to make them see the fallacy in** the statement "**John F. Kennedy is President** of the United States." Dr. Weinberg pointed out that **the inference, Nothing has changed** since we came into this classroom, **had not been checked by anybody who insisted the statement** about Kennedy **contained certainty.** Weinberg, like his students, got the lesson driven home with more drama than anybody expected, because **this class occurred on November 22**, 1963, **and everybody** soon **learned that during that class time** John F. **Kennedy had died** of an assassin's bullet and Lyndon B. Johnson had taken the oath as President of the United States. That makes the idea kind of hard to forget, doesn't it? Looking at sample five -- "The car... was a blue Ford" we might again encounter Bertrand Russell's two-head paradox. It seems a blue Ford exists "in" the head of the witness, but whether the blue Ford also existed "outside" that head remains unsure. Even outside tricky psychology labs, ordinary perception has become problematical due to the whole sad history of eye-witness testimony frequently breaking down in court. Or does the "external universe" (including the blue Ford) exist in some super-Head somwhere? It seems that the translation into **E-Prime** -- "I recall the car... as a blue Ford" **better accords with the experiential level of our existence** in spacetime **than** the two heads and other paradoxes we might encounter in **Standard English.**

1. Luciano Passuello, founder of Litemind.com. “Sharpen Your Critical Thinking with E-Prime,” 24 February 2009. <http://litemind.com/e-prime/> [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Joshua David Greene, currently an Assistant Professor of Psychology at Harvard University. “THE TERRIBLE, HORRIBLE, NO GOOD, VERY BAD TRUTH ABOUT MORALITY AND WHAT TO DO ABOUT IT.” Dissertation presented to Princeton University in candidacy for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy. November 2002. [http://www.wjh.harvard.edu/~jgreene/GreeneWJH/Greene-Dissertation.pdf](http://www.wjh.harvard.edu/%7Ejgreene/GreeneWJH/Greene-Dissertation.pdf) [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. \*Trisha Greenhaulgh, Professor of Primary Health Care at University College, London and \*\*Jill, senior lecturer in public policy at Queen Mary University, London (“Evidence-based policymaking: a critique,” Perspectives in Biology and Medicine, vol. 52, no. 2, Spring 2009, Academic OneFile) [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Dilip Gaonkar [Associate Professor of Communication Studies at Northwestern University] & Keith Topper [Assistant Professor of Communication Studies and Political Science at Northwestern University], Afterword: Notes on the Bearable Lightness of Being, The Hedgehog Review, Summer 2005, 96 [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Wilson, Robert (American writer, PhD in psychology from Paideia University). “Quantum Psychology.” 1990. <http://www.rawilson.com/quantum.html> [↑](#footnote-ref-5)